

Dear Mayor and Council,

I would like to express my support for the OP and Zoning By-law amendments for Block Plans 1 and 2 for the Guelph Innovation District. As a member of the Guelph Community for Active Transportation, I really appreciate the grid-style street layout because it allows pedestrians multiple routes to travel north-south and east-west, and it includes two off-street pedestrian corridors where walkers and cyclists can cut through to the mixed-amenities at the centre of the block. Grid-patterned streets offer natural traffic calming because cars have multiple turning options instead of queuing up and causing congestion when there are very few intersections. They also offer vulnerable road users alternatives, so if one street is busy, snowy, or obstructed, they can easily choose another street to get where they want to go.

In my volunteer work for GCAT and for the City of Guelph traffic calming civic circle, I have heard over and over again from residents how much they wish they could walk or cycle if they only felt safe from automobile traffic. This block plan has the potential to give confidence to tentative walkers or cyclists who might not otherwise choose to walk to buy milk or ride to the dentist.

On a recent field trip with my university urban planning class, we visited Cornell in Markham, a neighbourhood that was planned in the 90s with grid-style streets surrounding a central mixed-use plaza. The master planner told our class that car ownership went down and the walking went up, compared to neighbouring areas. So it's a proven recipe and I think it will work wonderfully for Guelph.

The other piece that will make the GID truly active is to connect it to downtown Guelph via protected infrastructure that follows the radial trail and potentially the Guelph Junction Railway right-of-way. This block plan allows for a pedestrian connection to that future corridor, which is why GCAT is truly excited about the potential for the Guelph Innovation District to be a model of car free/ car-light living.

Sincerely,

Claire Braden
GCAT Advocacy Committee